

## Imam Ahmed Raza Khan as a Muhaddith

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Whenever we are requested to talk about Imam Ahmed Raza Khan, we need to sit down for a few days and ponder on the aspects to talk about. The personality and achievements of Imam Ahmed Raza Khan cannot be encompassed in words. Regardless, we praise him with the best of our abilities to get our names added to the list of his lovers. The truth is, Imam Ahmed Raza Khan was such a multi-talented personality that Muslims have not seen someone with these types of skills within the last 5 or 6 centuries.

If you look at his poetry, you will find an ocean of rhetoric and eloquence. You will find him better than any other Eastern poet who writes about love. If you look at his scientific research, you will find a treasure of proofs and research.. If you look at him from the perspective of Fiqh and Fatwa, you will see a thirteen-year-old boy writing his first Fatwa, that too about a complicated issue of Rida'ah. If you look at his theology, you will see a traveler, who goes for Umrah, gets a fever, and still writes a great treatise within a few hours outlining the proofs supporting the Ilm e Ghaib<sup>1</sup> of Beloved Messenger ﷺ, without having any physical books with him.

Nevertheless, all the aspects of Imam Ahmed Raza Khan are great. But here, we will talk about his expertise in Hadith Science. We will talk about his work as a Muhadith. Many people accuse Imam Ahmed Raza Khan and his followers to be those who do not follow the Hadith or those who simply spend all their time mentioning the marvels of Awlia while being unaware of the Hadith. This excerpt will reveal the truth, and make it evident to our readers how much expertise Imam Ahmed Raza had on Hadiths, and what those treasures of knowledge were that he left for his followers.

Most importantly, it is imperative to know that Hadith Science is one of the hardest subjects in Islamic Studies. From a distant perspective, it seems as if it is only one subject, however, in reality, this subject is a combination of around 10 different sciences.

Just like Imam Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti al-Shafai says in his book Tadrīb al-Rawī;

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<sup>1</sup> Knowledge of the unseen

علم الحديث يشتمل انواعا كثيرة تبلغ مائة و كل نوع منها علم مستقل لو أنفق الطالب فيه عمره لما أدرك نهاية.

“Hadith sciences consist of many different categories which go up to a hundred. Each one of these categories is a subject in itself. If a student spends his entire life on it, even then he would not be able to get it.”<sup>2</sup>

Whenever we read the works of Imam Ahmed Raza Khan, we always find the following five things in them regarding Hadith - the Hadith narrations:

- Were mentioned in relevance to the issue
- Provided vast hadith textual collection and channels of transmission
- Outlined clarification and accuracy in Hadith terminology
- Provided commendation and criticism of the narrators
- Had a great deal of conciliation between mutually contradictory hadith narrations.<sup>3</sup>

Regarding Imam Ahmed Raza Khan’s expertise in Hadith, the Grand Hadith Master Shaykh Wasi Ahmed Soorti (may Allah be pleased with him) says, “All the Hadiths which are regularly referred to in the Hanafi fiqh were always present in Ala Hazrat’s memory. Moreover, the correct interpretation and objections against all of those Hadiths through which Hanafi fiqh was attacked were on his fingertips,” The scholars say that upon hearing a Hadith, whenever Imam Ahmed Raza commented on the narrators of it, the words he used would be exactly the same as they are mentioned in the major books of this subject.

A great shaykh of Ahl us Sunnah, Shaykh Sayyid Mehr Ali Shah (may Allah be pleased with him) states that once he traveled to Bareilly shareef to meet Imam Ahmed Raza, and saw him teaching Hadith. The Shaykh states, “When I saw him teach Hadith, it felt as if while being blessed with the vision of the Holy Messenger ﷺ, the Imam was teaching hadith in his blessed illumination”<sup>4</sup>.

Furthermore, to take a deeper look at his expertise, we see that the blessed father of Imam Ahmed Raza Khan, Shaykh Naqi Ali Khan wrote a book “Ahsan ul-Wi’a li Adaab id-Dua” in which he outlined the

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<sup>2</sup> Tadreeb Al Rawi vol 1 Page 146

<sup>3</sup> Imam Ahmad Raza Mastery in Hadith Sciences (Alahazrat.net)

<sup>4</sup> Angoothay Choomnay ka Sharai Hukm pg 8.

etiquettes of supplications. Imam Ahmed Raza wrote a commentary on this book and proved every single etiquette from Hadith. Not only this, the author had written around 51 etiquettes, but Imam Ahmed Raza made it reach 60 in total. The scholars believe that this was due to his respect for his father, otherwise, the way this book is written, it seems as if he would have written many more. The actual author mentioned around 36 such times of the day in which supplication is accepted - Imam Ahmed Raza commented on that, added few details, and made this number reach 45. The author mentioned around 23 possibilities of acceptance - Imam Ahmed Raza made it go up to 44. The author wrote 9 reasons because of which supplications are not accepted - Imam Ahmed Raza added 10 more reasons. The author wrote about 8 such people whose supplications are not accepted - Imam Ahmed Raza made this number reach 19. It is noteworthy to remember, all of these additions that Imam Ahmed Raza did were not void from proof. He provided the proper Hadiths along with the chain of narrations for every proof he gave. Praise be to Allah, such a great level of knowledge.<sup>5</sup>

### **Some famous works of Imam Ahmed Raza Khan**

To add on to our point, we will briefly introduce the works of Imam Ahmed Raza Khan in terms of Hadiths.

- When someone asked him if it is allowed to refer to the Messenger ﷺ as Dafi al Bala (remover of calamities), he wrote a risala (booklet) called Al Amn o Wal Ula. In this risala, he wrote around 300 hadiths proving that Messenger ﷺ is Dafi al bala.
- When someone asked him if our beloved Messenger ﷺ is the best of the Prophets, his pen started writing proofs, and the book was called Tajjali ul-Yaqeen bi anna Nabiyyana Sayyidul Mursaleen. In this, he wrote around 100 Hadiths to prove this point.
- In his book Jaza'ullahi Adduwahu, he wrote around 121 Hadiths to refute Mirza Qadiyani in his claim of Prophethood.

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<sup>5</sup> Imam Ahmed Raza aur Ilm e Hadis pg 26

- When he was asked if it is allowed to pray Salah behind deviants, he wrote a masterpiece called “Al-Nahi ul-Akeed ‘an is-Salah wara’a ‘adat-Taqlaad” in which he wrote around 12 Hadiths proving the excellence of saints and 78 Hadiths refuting Wahhabism, outlining their birth and signs.
- He further wrote the following:
  - 91 Hadiths about the rights of parents.
  - 70 Hadiths proving impermissibility of Sajda e Tahiyat (The sajda done for respect).
  - 56 Hadiths proving the importance and necessity of growing a beard.
  - 40 Hadiths on the topic of Intercession of the beloved Messenger ﷺ.
  - 27 Hadiths proving the impermissibility of printed pictures.
- Someone asked him regarding kissing thumbs upon hearing the blessed name of our Messenger ﷺ. The actual issue is that those Hadiths which are narrated regarding this are called Non-Sahih. Imam Ahmed Raza Khan wrote around 200 pages of work titled “**Munir ul Ayn fi Hukmi Taqbil il Ibhamayn** (Enlightening the eyes regarding the ruling of kissing the thumbs)”. In this work, Imam Ahmed Raza outlined hundreds of rules and regulations regarding extracting and deriving rulings from Hadiths. Along with this, he mentioned some other beneficial points which remove the doubts from the minds of Muslims and exposed the ignorant people who confuse Muslims by calling this an innovation.

### **Main points of Munir ul Ain**

In order to add to our point, let us briefly mention a few narrations in this matter. Therefore, it is mentioned by Imam Sakhawi in Al-Maqaasid Al-Hasanah that the first Caliph of Islam, Sayyiduna Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq, used to kiss the backside of his finger whenever he heard the Muazzin say the name of beloved Messenger ﷺ. Seeing this, the beloved Messenger ﷺ said, “Whoever does however my friend has done, my intercession will be Halal on him.”

Similarly, in Al-Maqasid Al-Hasana, it is narrated from Sayyiduna Khizr عليه السلام that the one who hears the name of beloved Messenger ﷺ in Azan and says *مرحبا بجيبي و قره عيني محمد بن عبد الله*, then kisses his thumbs and puts it on his eyes, his eyes will never hurt.

Another similar narration is mentioned by Faqeeh Muhammad bin Lababah that on one windy day, a pebble went inside his eyes which would not come out, and caused a lot of pain. At that time, he heard the name of the beloved Messenger ﷺ and did the action mentioned above. As a result, the pebble came out of his eyes immediately.<sup>6</sup>

However, after narrating these types of Hadiths, the experts either used “لا يصح” (This hadith is not Saheeh) or they mentioned some other issue with the chain.

Some people question - if the Hadith experts have said لا يصح for a narration, can we still act on it? In other words, is it proven to kiss the fingers upon hearing the name of beloved Messenger ﷺ? To answer this question, let's take a look at the main points from his work:

Firstly, if there is no proof regarding the impermissibility of something, this absence of proof itself denotes the permissibility of that action. Actually, the actions being permissible is the default situation in every single case. In simple words, everything is Halal until proven Haram. The people who consider an action Halal do not need proof, since they are acting on the default situation. It is the people who call it Haram that will need proof.

Secondly, just because the Hadith experts call something non-Saheeh, this does not mean that it automatically becomes Maudu' (fabricated). If the experts consider a Hadith to not be Saheeh, it could also mean that they consider it Hasan<sup>7</sup>. Even if a Hadith is Daeef (weak), then it is an agreed-upon rule of the Muhadithun that كثرة الطرق (multiple chains) will remove the weakness of that chain, and that Hadith will be considered Hasan. Even if there are no multiple chains, and the only chain you have is Daeef, still it

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<sup>6</sup> Fatawa Razawiya Vol 5, pg 432-433

<sup>7</sup> Such a Hadith whose narrators are upright and exact. However, this exactness does not go up to the level of Sahih.

will be allowed to act on this Hadith if it is talking about some virtues according to the consensus of our honorable scholars.

Kissing the fingers upon hearing the name of beloved Messenger ﷺ is proven from our pious predecessors. If an action is done with so much significance, then Muslims can act on it even if there is no Hadith proving this action. This is because this action does not go against any Islamic Law, nor any Sunnah. This means this action is permissible. There are many narrations outlining the virtues of this action as we saw earlier.<sup>8</sup>

Nevertheless, we should pay attention to one detail regarding Hadith sciences. Just like we mentioned in the beginning, Hadith science is not just one subject, it is a combination of multiple subjects. Nevertheless, we should understand the difference between a Marfu Hadith and a Mauquf Hadith. Marfu Hadith is the one which is attributed to the beloved Messenger ﷺ and a Sahabi narrates it. However, the Mauquf Hadith is the one that ends at the Sahabi. It could be his action, any description, report, or a piece of information given by him. If you look closely at the comments of Hadith experts, you will see they clearly say something like “لا يصح في المرفوع” (This Hadith is not Sahih in Marfu). Imam Ahmed Raza analyzes this and says that this should only be restricted to Marfu. These Hadith experts do not use non-Sahih for Mauquf Hadiths. Furthermore, if we have a Mauquf Hadith, that too in which the narrator is the best of creation after messengers, Sayyiduna Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq, then in this case, how can this Hadith be ignored or left?

We have to understand the actual meaning of “Sahih Hadith”. The reality is that “Sahih” is the highest level of a Hadith, which has numerous requirements, and there are numerous factors that can rule out its strength. It is because of this reason, many Hadiths do not qualify as Sahih. This is where the Hadith experts will say “لا يصح” (This hadith is not Saheeh). However, the rank below Sahih is called Hasan. Keep in mind, there is nothing bad about a Hasan Hadith. The scholars have been using Hasan Hadith to derive proof.

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<sup>8</sup> Fatawa Razawiya Vol 5, pg 431

## Opinion of Hadith Experts regarding this

It is stated in نزهة النظر:

هذا القسم من الحسن مشارك للصحيح في الاحتجاج به وإن كان دونه

This type of Hasan is just like Sahih in terms of deriving proof through it, though it is lower than Sahih.

Similarly, the summary of Allama Ali Qari words in Al-Asrar ul-Marfu'a is considered to be: لا يصح لا ينافي الحسن, meaning that when the Hadith experts say لا يصح (it is not Sahih), this does not contradict with Hasan.<sup>9</sup>

Al-Shaykh Al-Muhaqqiq Abdul Haq Muhadith al-Dehwli mentions in his Sharh of Sirat ul Mustaqeem:

حتى دریں شش کتاب کہ آنرا صحاح ستہ گویند ہم بہ اصطلاح ایشان صحیح نیست، بلکہ تسمیہ آنها صحاح باعتبار تغلب ست  
Even the six books which are called "Sihah Sitta" are not fully "Saheeh" according to the terminology..

Rather, they are called "Sihah" by considering the majority.<sup>10</sup>

As you can see all the Hadiths in the six most authentic books of Hadith are not Sahih. These books are called "Sihah" because most (but not all) Hadiths that it contains are Sahih.

Furthermore, it is stated in Tadreeb Al-Rawi<sup>11</sup>

إن وصف الحسن و الصحيح و الضعيف إنما هو باعتبار السند ظناً. أما في الواقع فيجوز غلط الصحيح و صحة الضعيف.

Indeed labeling (a Hadith as) Hasan, Sahih, and Daef is only by considering its chain with a dominant opinion. As far as reality is concerned, then it's possible that a Sahih hadith could be wrong and a Daef Hadith could be Sahih.

This proves that just because a hadith is not Sahih, does not mean it is Maudu'. The terms Sahih and Maudu' are the two extremes of Hadith rank. Sahih is the best rank while Maudu' is the lowest. However, it is noteworthy that there are multiple ranks between Sahih and Maudu. If a Hadith is not called Sahih, it

<sup>9</sup> Al-Asrar ul Marfua pg 969

<sup>10</sup> Sharh of Sirat al Mustaqeem pg 502

<sup>11</sup> Tadreeb Al-Rawi 1, pg 75-76.

could easily mean that the Hadith is called with the ranks that are between Sahih and Maudu. Therefore, caution should be taken regarding this matter.

There is a Hadith in which the beloved Messenger ﷺ prohibited from drawing blood on Wednesdays as it will cause leprosy. This Hadith is considered to be Daef by Hadith experts. However, Imam Suyuti mentions in Al-La'ali Al-Masnu'a that there was a man named Muhammad bin Jafar Nishapuri who needed to draw blood on a Wednesday. He thought that the Hadith which prohibits it is Daef and it will not harm him. Nevertheless, he drew some blood out and got afflicted with leprosy. When he slept, he was blessed with the vision of beloved Messenger ﷺ and he requested assistance. The Messenger ﷺ said إياك و الإستهانة بحديثي (Beware of considering my Hadith as low). Upon hearing this, the man repented and when he woke up he was cured of leprosy.

Similarly, Imam Tahawi mentions in his Hashiya of Radd ul Muthar, there is a Hadith that says that clipping nails on Wednesday will cause leprosy. A person named Ibn ul Haj intended to cut his nails on Wednesday. When people reminded him that it is forbidden in the Hadith as it causes leprosy, he rejected this reminder and said that the Hadith is not Sahih according to him. After clipping his nails on Wednesday, he became afflicted with leprosy. When he slept at night, he got blessed with the vision of beloved Messenger ﷺ, who asked Ibn ul Haj: "Did you not hear me prohibiting this action?". Ibn ul Haj replied "The Hadith was not Sahih according to me." Upon this, the beloved Messenger ﷺ said: "It was enough for you to just hear it". Then the beloved Messenger ﷺ rubbed his blessed hands on Ibn ul Haj's body which removed all of his leprosy.<sup>12</sup>

These events tell us that the words of our beloved Messenger ﷺ can not be Daef (weak). The actual weakness is in the chain not in the words.

After this, let's briefly take a look at the few benefits mentioned by Imam Ahmed Raza:

- 1) If a Hadith is not Sahih, it does not mean it's fabricated.

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<sup>12</sup> Fatawa Razawiya Vol 5, pg 498-501

- 2) If a narrator is not well known in a chain of narration, the maximum effect this can cause is that it will make the chain Da'eef (which is not always the case). However, even in this case, it will not be considered Maudu'.
- 3) If a Hadith is Munqati (i.e. in the chain of narration, some narrator is cut off), then that does not mean it is Maudu'. There are many Hadith experts that accept this type of chain. However, the ones who do not accept it, consider it Da'eef, not Maudu'.
- 4) If a Hadith is Mudtarib, it will not be Maudu'. Actually, even if it is Munkar or Mudraj, it will not be Maudu'. Just like the others, the maximum this can cause is weakness in the chain.
- 5) If there is such a Hadith in which the narrator is totally unknown, such as someone says حَدَّثَنِي رَجُلٌ (A man narrated to me), even this will not be Maudu'. This will also cause weakness.
- 6) If the narrators are weak, then calling this Hadith as Maudu' is oppression. (Think about it, weak narrators are known. If we are not calling unknown people's Hadiths as Maudu', how can this type be Maudu'?)
- 7) If the narrator is such a person, who adopts other people's suggestions while narrating, still the Hadith will not be Maudu'. For example, the narrator is narrating "I heard ABC." Someone else says, "No you heard XYZ." The narrator changes his mind and says "Yes I must have heard ABC."
- 8) If someone is called مَنْكَرُ الْحَدِيثِ, narrating from him is impermissible. However, his narrations will not be called Maudu' either. At most, just like others, it will be called Da'eef.
- 9) If the narrator is Matrook (it is suspected that he lies about narrations), even his Hadith will not be considered Maudu' automatically. At most, it will be Da'eef.
- 10) Here are some of the ways that a chain can be considered Da'eef:
  - a) It explicitly goes against the Quran.
  - b) It explicitly goes against a famous mass transmitted Sunnah.
  - c) It explicitly goes against Ijma' (consensus of scholars).
  - d) It explicitly goes against the human intellect.
  - e) It explicitly goes against those things which are considered good in society.
  - f) It explicitly goes against a famous historical fact etc.

- 11) Many times, when a chain is called Maudu' or Da'eef, this rank is specific to that specific chain, not the actual Hadith. It is possible that the Hadith be proven from another chain. Therefore, just because a Muhaddith calls a Hadith as Da'eef or Maudu', we have to consider it restricted to that specific chain, we cannot claim that the Hadith is fake.
- 12) If there are many chains of a Da'eef Hadith, that Da'eef Hadith goes up to the level of Hasan. As it is stated in Mirqat Sharh Mishkat:
  - a) تعدد الطرق يبلغ الحديث الضعيف إلى حد الحسن (the multiplicity of chains makes the Weak Hadith reach to the level of Hasan).
- 13) The multiple narrations also compensate for the loss of unknown Hadiths and make it go up to Hasan.
- 14) Even if a Hadith has 2 narrations, it will get stronger.
- 15) If people of knowledge act on a specific Hadith, this also gives strength to that.
- 16) The rulings that are proven by Hadiths can be three types:
  - a) Theological rulings (عقائد): These can only be proven by Mutawatir or Mash'hoor Hadiths. Any Hadith other than this cannot have an effect here.
  - b) Rulings regarding actions: These can be proven by صحيح whether by itself or by some other factor and حسن whether by itself or some other factor. The Da'eef Hadiths cannot play a role here.
  - c) Virtues, Blessings, Praises: To prove this, even Da'eef Hadiths can be accepted. This has been a consensus of legendary Islamic scholars.
- 17) Following a Da'eef Hadith regarding virtues is not only permissible but is Mustahab (preferred).
- 18) To act on Da'eef Hadith regarding virtues is proven from the Hadith. There is a Hadith in Kanz ul Ummal which says:
 

من بلغه عن الله عز وجل شيء فيه فضيلة فأخذ به إيماناً به ورجاء ثوابه أعطاه الله تعالى ذلك وإن لم يكن كذلك

“If such news reaches a person from Allah Almighty in which virtues are mentioned. Then that person takes it because of his belief in it, and because of him hoping for rewards from it, then

Allah Almighty will give him that reward even if the news was not true.” (Kanz ul Ummal # 43132)

- 19) Even the human brain supports this rule that Da'eef Hadith can be used in terms of virtues. Think about it, if you find a narration that does not go against any Islamic law or Quran, Hadith, Ijma' etc as we mentioned in point 10, then what is the problem in following that Hadith?
- 20) A Da'eef Hadith can even be accepted regarding Islamic rulings if there is a precaution. It is stated in Tadreeb Al-Rawi<sup>13</sup>:

ويعمل بالضعيف أيضا في الأحكام إذا كان فيه احتياط.

The Da'eef Hadith can be followed as well in Islamic rulings if there is a precaution in it.

All of these facts prove that just because a Hadith is considered Da'eef by Hadith experts, does not mean that the Hadith is fake and should be ignored. There are many possibilities that come with this. As we mentioned earlier, the words of beloved Messenger ﷺ are not considered fake in a Da'eef Hadith, there is no weakness in the blessed words of our beloved Messenger ﷺ. The actual weakness lies in the chain of this narration. Therefore, if you ever come across someone rejecting a Hadith just because it is Da'eef, you should understand that this person is unaware of Hadith sciences and he was misguided by the deviants.

Take a look around you, any Hadith you see which talks about the virtues or miracles of the beloved Messenger ﷺ gets called Da'eef by deviants and they reject it. When the righteous lovers of beloved Messenger mention those Hadiths, they are accused of forging evidence. After all these details that we have mentioned here, do you have any doubt that a Da'eef Hadith cannot be called forged? Ironically, this act of considering a Da'eef Hadith as fabricated is a fabrication itself. This rule which tells you to reject Da'eef Hadiths totally is fabricated, as no Hadith expert has ever said this. Moreover, this act of considering a Da'eef Hadith as fabricated is an innovation, acting on a Da'eef Hadith for virtues is not an innovation.

There are way more things mentioned in the treatise of Imam Ahmed Raza, but to avoid lengthiness, we were bound to choose a few important points that would summarize this work, show the expertise of

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<sup>13</sup> Tadreeb Al-Rawi 1, pg 296

Imam Ahmed Raza Khan in Hadith, and reveal the truth regarding Daeef Hadiths. The entire work is a great masterpiece and serves as a guide for whoever intends to learn Hadith Sciences. Remember, all the points mentioned over here were summarized briefly. In the actual treatise, Imam Ahmed Raza Khan gave numerous proofs for each point he outlined. Therefore, do not let Satan instill this confusion in your heart that all of these points are made up.

Nevertheless, after mentioning all of these points, we hope our readers understand the significance of Imam Ahmed Raza Khan. He was not only a poet, he had many more skills that needed to be showcased. By the grace of Allah, we got the honor of this service for the Muslim Ummah.

Dear Muslims, it is a humble request: do not forget your well-wishers. Do not ignore your benefactors. Imam Ahmed Raza has clarified Islam for us in many ways. He is the reason we have the core Islamic values in our hearts. The least we can do is spread his teachings and follow his path firmly. May Allah guide us on the right path and grant us Jannah without accountability for the sake of Sayyidi Murshidi Imam Ahmed Raza Khan.

*~Remember the author in your Duas*

*Abul Wafa*

*Muhammad Bilal Sadiq*

*Al-Qadri Al-Attari*

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